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LIFE OF MARGARET SHIPPEN, WIFE OF BENEDICT
ARNOLD.

BY LEWIS BURD WALKER.

(Continued from page 244.)

PHILADA. 28 March 1802.

MY DEAR DAUGHTER;

I am most sensibly affected by your feeling letter delivered me by Mr. Bond, who was kind enough to forward my several letters which you regret the not receiving. Whatever delays may have prevented their safe or speedy conveyance, I have no doubt they have reached your hands long before this.

I most sincerely wish it were in my power to alleviate your Afflictions, what I can do I certainly will. I inclose you a little present of £200 Sterling in a Bill of Exchange drawn by William Waln on Bainbridge, Ansley & Co—besides observing your directions as to sending £500 Sterling to Miss Fitch under cover to Mr. Coxe for the payment of which, I have sold your shares in the Bank of North America & Pennsylvania. I shall in future endeavour to repeat a present to you annually of £100 Sterling to enable you to enjoy some few comforts which I fear from your letter you have been deprived of by your distresses.

It is natural that you should assist your Sons for whose welfare you seem so much concerned—but after the two eldest are possessed of a present provision and probably in a way to acquire a still better, I should suppose they would not in future, when they knew your situation, oppress you with their draughts for money; they will rather pinch themselves a little & endeavour to proportion their expences to their incomes:—at my death, which from the course of nature cannot be very distant, you will find yourself enabled further to assist them.

I feel very grateful to Mr. Coxe for his very kind exertions in your behalf: if it should ever be in my power to shew my sense of them, I shall certainly demonstrate it more than by words. I am glad to find by the death of his Aunt Rebecca Coxe that he will probably come in for a part of her Estate

which I am told in land & money will amount to the value of near two Hundred thousand Dollars.

I am glad you have taken a smaller house, & shew such a disposition to economise. I presume you find it necessary to reside in London, otherwise I suppose you could live with as much comfort, and at a much less expense in some convenient Country town: but as I never had reason to distrust your prudence I know you will do in this respect what is right.

All your friends here desire to be most cordially remembered to you.

I am my dear Child
ever most affectionately Yours.

PHILAD. 13 May 1802.

MY DEAR PEGGY,

I have been much affected by your last letter rec'd a few days ago. I feel exceedingly for your distress as well as for the delicate Situation you are in; but do not my dear Child suffer your mind to be debilitated by Anxiety, consider your future Welfare & that of your Children may depend upon the firmness with which you support present distresses. I wonder much that my several letters have never come to hand,—three of them contained Bills of Exchange, one for £120 Sterling, one for £200 & one for £500, the latter enclosed according to your directions to Miss Fitch: duplicates of all which I have sent by different opportunities.

If you should be obliged to give up the Affairs of Gen'l Arnold to his Creditors, you must of course deliver up your brother's bond, which however they may consider as a desperate debt he possessing no property, & depending for the Support of himself & family upon my occasional Assistance, his little business as a Physician, being by no means sufficient; if they should push him, he will doubtless take the benefit of the Act of Bankruptcy. I have desired Mr. Burd to write you his Sentiments on this Subject.

I would with the greatest pleasure afford Mr. Coxe every assistance in my power respecting his Aunt's Estate, being fully satisfied of his Merit & kind exertions in your behalf. I have written him on this Subject, but find that Mr. Bond has before informed him fully what may be expected. I sincerely hope no well founded objections will be made to his just Claim, which

amounts to something very handsome. The family here are not disposed to throw any difficulties in his Way, and yet will probably insist upon their *legal* rights whatever they may be. If the Question of Alienage should be made in his case & not in his Sister's (as she took no active part) it would not encrease their Share of the Estate, and would only be a matter between Mr. Coxe & Mrs. Kempe, about which they would probably not concern themselves. I hope however no difficulties will arise from any question, yet it would be prudent in Mr. Coxe to get the best legal opinion from New York where the most valuable part of the Real Estate lies.

PHILADA. 18. June 1802

MY DEAR DAUGHTER,

Reflecting upon the disconsolate life you must lead in London, as well from the absence of all your natural friends, as the frequent attacks on your health and the distress of your mind, I cannot feel myself easy without giving you another invitation to my house—the Change of Scene and the Company and Sympathy of your best & most natural friends & relatives here will tend to dissipate the gloom which I cannot but discover from your letters to have taken possession of your mind. If you cannot bring yourself to consent to a permanent Stay with us on account of your Children's interest, you can at least make us a visit for a year or two, by which time I have no doubt you will recover your health & Spirits, so as to enable you to form your future plans with correctness.

Your Sisters are all happily situated & will have the highest pleasure in contributing to your Agrément. If this plan should meet with your Concurrence, you will bring with you, your sweet daughter Sophia, and your youngest son William, who can be accommodated with a good School either in the City or at some Seminary in the Neighbourhood. I presume George is in a better way of receiving a proper Education where he is & will be within reach of profiting by his elder brothers wishes' to serve him. Mr. Daniel Coxe has been so good a friend to you that I dare say he will undertake to manage the business of the General's Estate in your absence, either alone or in conjunction with one or two others whom he may recommend, and also to conduct the business of your & your Children's Pensions under proper

powers of Attorney.—the Relief you will receive from the perplexing business of that Estate, by a temporary absence will tend to tranquillize your mind & restore you to your wonted health. Pray my dear Child give this matter your best Consideration, and when resolved put the plan into immediate execution. We shall all receive you here with heartfelt Satisfaction, and flatter ourselves we shall, under God, be the happy means of adding to your felicity.

I make no doubt you have long since received my former letters inclosing Bills of Exchange.

With my best love to my dear Child, I subscribe myself

Your ever affectionate father.

PHILADA. 30 Nov 1802

MY DEAR PEGGY.

It was with the utmost pleasure I received your last Letter of the 5th of October, as it convinced me of the returned Serenity of your mind as well as of the restoration of your health. It is indeed a Letter fraught with good Sense and just reflections & leaves me no room to doubt but that you will in future possess all the Intellect you ever had:—the mind has certainly a powerful Effect on the Body, from whence I likewise hope your health will be completely restored. It must greatly conduce to your happiness that your Children have conducted themselves so much to your satisfaction and that their prospects are so promising.

You appear to have friends sensible of your Worth, which gives me great Comfort, being certain that your correct Conduct & good dispositions will secure to you a continuance of their friendship.

I am sorry to hear that your friends Mr. & Mrs. Coxe have met with so severe a loss as the death of their beloved daughter. I shall always respect & love them for their kindness to you. I had frequently told their Son Doct. John Redman Coxe how sincerely I was disposed to do every thing in my power to show my gratitude. He has thought it right to apply to our Government for a pardon for his father: he having been with divers others in the early stages of our revolution attainted of High Treason on account of his adherence to the British. I was the first Signer of the Application to the Governor for that purpose

& hope it will be successful. This may be of use to him if he should ever find his Affairs will call him to this Country.

I have given your Sisters a hint how pleasing it would be to you to receive frequent Letters from them;—they promise well but have all lazy fits in the article of letter-writing.

My best love attends you & all your dear Children.

I am &c.

PHILADA. 3 April 1803.

MY DEAR PEGGY,

Your Letter of the 5th of January gave me great pleasure, not only as it proved to me the restoration of your health & Spirits, but as it gave me expectations that your late embarrassments are subsiding.

I inclose you a Bill of Exchange for £250 Sterling, £100 of which I mean as a present, the remaining £150: I shall charge to your Account of Moneys here which altho' not yet received, will come to my hands in course; having an Opportunity of purchasing what I esteemed a good bill, and thinking the Money might be convenient to you at this time, altho' by way of anticipation I have ventured to send it, altho it will diminish your next remittance.

You mention Mount Pleasant Farm. I thought I had before explained this business to you. The Mortgage of Macpherson to Osborne which lay upon the place when it was purchased, was some years ago put in Suit & the reversion by this means sunk; about 25 or 26 Acres of the land was not included in that Mortgage, but was incumbered by another Mortgage of Macpherson to one Mason, who is now about selling it, & I am told it will not yield sufficient to discharge his Mortgage. So that no hopes can arise from any residue of that Estate. When the House part was sold under Osborne's Mortgage, I likewise sold the life Estate which I had purchased from Maclanagan, for two hundred pounds less than I gave for it.

I am pleased you have taken a house of small Rent in London; your Oeconomy can reflect no disgrace, but on the contrary much Credit on you with all those who knew you before, and I dare say you are not ambitious of making new friendships.

Your Sister Sally lives with me still, much to our mutual sat-

isfaction and happiness. Whatever Reports may have gone abroad as to changing her Condition by Marriage, all that matter has been long at an end; the Gentleman who wished to have her, altho a Man of fortune is incumbered with so many Children, some of them grown up, that Sally wisely foresaw evil at a distance & declined the Connection, altho if he had been differently situated as to family, I believe he was himself much to her taste.

I think it probable one of your Sisters will write you by this Opportunity; from them you will hear any little details relating to your family & friends. I feel myself tolerably well except a little Sciatica and some Symptoms of advanced Age, which remind me that a better world is in View. My best love to your dear Daughter & your good Sons. I am always with truth & sincerity,

Your affectionate father,

E. S.

PHILADA. 18 April 1804.

MY DEAR PEGGY,

With much grief I have heard of the precarious State of your health: your family are greatly interested in it, and I hope in God you will be speedily reinstated. It must be a great Addition to your Afflictions, that the public affairs of England are in so distracted and hazardous a Condition. We have been in continual Expectation of hearing of Buonoparte's attempt to land in England; it is strangely protracted if it is really intended. I have no doubt of his eventual failure if he persists; his delay has given the British Administration ample time to make full preparations for his reception.

I am grown old, after having experienced my Share of distress both public and private & hope in God I shall go out of the World, without feeling more of either.

I inclose you a Bill of Exchange drawn by John Collet on Thomas Wilson for £180 Sterling, which I hope will be duly honored; Eighty pounds of this is of your own Money & the remaining hundred Pounds you will accept as a present.

My best love to all your dear family and believe me to be with the utmost truth & sincerity,

Your ever affectionate father.

MY DEAR PEGGY,

I wrote you on the 18th instant a letter inclosing a Bill of Exchange for £180 Sterling of which £80 was your own money; the remaining £100 a present. I take this opportunity of sending you a Second Bill of the same Sett.

I received a very kind letter from Mr. D. Coxe your very valuable friend acquainting me with the very critical State of your health & the apprehensions of your friends as to the Result, and advising me to make a proper provision in my Will in favor of your Children in Case of your death. I cannot bear to think of the possibility of losing you thus early in life: but for fear of Accidents, I shall certainly follow Mr. Coxe's advice & especially in favor of your lovely daughter.

Since the receipt of his letter I have the superlative pleasure of hearing through the medium of Doct. Redman's family that your recovery is almost beyond a doubt. I hope in God, I shall be confirmed in this pleasing Intelligence by your next Letter.

I am &c.

March 28, 1802.

DANIEL COXE, LONDON.

At the request of my daughter Mrs. Arnold I have taken the liberty to trouble you with the inclosures.

I feel infinitely obliged to you for the many acts of friendship and kindness, which my daughter assures me you have conferred upon her. Your Exertions in her behalf shall never be forgotten, by

Sir, Your &c.

PHILADELPHIA May 13, 1802.

DANIEL COXE.

My daughter, Mrs. Arnold inclosed me a memorandum of yours respecting your and your sisters claims to the estate of your late Aunt Rebecca, with her wishes that I would afford you my best advice or assistance on this subject.

I most sincerely wish it were in my power to manifest my Sense of the kind assistance you have afforded to her in her distressed Situation. As I find Mr. Bond has investigated this Subject so as to give you a full and true state of every thing relating to it, less will be necessary for me to say. I understand by the laws of New Jersey and New York the personal Estate will be

distributed per capita, real Estate per stirpes. So that you and your Sister will take one half of the latter, the males to take double shares: in New Jersey however the real estate will not be confined to the Brother's and Sister's Children but Grandchildren will come in as Representatives of their deceased parents. I would be fuller on this Subject if Mr. Bond had not exhausted it; he has had conversations with Judge Coxe the eldest son of your Uncle William, from whom he has received all possible information.

I understand that branch of the family have consulted Lawyers of Eminence in New Jersey and will probably act in conformity to their Opinions. I believe however they have not yet obtained any Opinion upon the only point that can possibly affect the case to your disadvantage, (there being it seems no corruption of blood) I mean the question of alienage—this point has been taken up in different lights in different States. Men have been acquitted on a Charge of treason on the ground of their having taken their Sides before the Declaration of Independence, and by that means changed their Allegiance before any treasonable Act committed, from whence some have supposed that from that Moment they became Aliens and incapable of taking by descent. On this point, as well as how far the case is affected by the treaty of Peace, I think you ought to take the Opinion of good Counsel in the State of New York, where the most valuable parts of the realty lies,—perhaps it would be best to consult both Mr. Alexander Hamilton and Brockhurst Livingston, who are among the heads of the two parties there and both esteemed good Lawyers. I mean to suggest this to your Son John as a prudent step.

The family here would no doubt take all they have a legal right to, but I believe do not wish to act an unfriendly, much less an unfair part by you or your Sister. If I can hereafter collect any intelligence that would be useful for you to know, I shall make a point of communicating it either to yourself or your Son.

PHILADA June 18 1802

DANIEL COXE,
MY DEAR SIR;

I cannot sufficiently express the Warmth of my gratitude for your very kind and active exertions in behalf of my unfortunate daughter Mrs. Arnold, and particularly for the last proof you

have given of it, by writing me so fully the State of her mind and health. I had before invited her to my Arms and house, but from the Situation of her deceased husband's Affairs, and from a belief that her remaining in England would benefit her Children, she declined accepting my Invitation: but I have now in consequence of your kind representation and Advice again invited her to at least a temporary Visit of a year or two, and have endeavoured to enforce my invitation with such reasons as I hope will prevail on her to oblige me. I have suggested to her that from your former kind exertions I make no doubt you will accept a power of Attorney in conjunction with any other person or persons whom you may recommend, to manage the affairs of the General's estate, and of her and her Children's pensions. I doubt not but on the receipt of my Letter, she will consult you on the Subject of it, your best advice will be ever gratefully acknowledged.

PHILADELPHIA Sept 17, 1804

DANIEL COXE, Esq.,

DEAR SIR:

I am unable to express in words my sense of your unparalleled kindness and attention to my dear daughter and her family. You can easily conceive my feelings in reading your friendly and foreboding Letter. God grant some unexpected turn may take place altho after the Sentiments you express from such good authority, I have scarcely any room to expect it. I must lay my account upon the worst that can happen: my great Comfort is that her well spent life will secure her a happy Existence hereafter.

Among other things, I am much obliged to you for your kind and well judged Advice as to settling the property I mean for my daughter upon her Children in case of her untimely decease. I did indeed in consequence of your former letter make a provision in my Will for that Event, allotting one half of my daughter's share to her daughter and the remainder to the Sons according to their wants. This was a sudden arrangement; any other which you may recommend considering your knowledge of the family and kind disposition towards them, I shall gladly listen to and be disposed to adopt.

In case of the Calamitous Event so much to be apprehended,

Sophia will be at some loss as to her future destination. I shall think it my duty, if she can reconcile herself to a life of some retirement, to give her an invitation to come over to America, and reside in my family: in this way I shall be very happy to provide for her, till my departure from this World, which considering my Age and growing Infirmities cannot be at a very distant period, after which she will not want a decent provision, tho' not an affluent one.

Pray present my tenderest Love to my dear Peggy, and acquaint her with as much of the contents of this Letter as you think prudent in her Situation.

Accept my sincerest and most fervent thanks for all your kindness and believe me to be, Dear Sir,

Your most affectionate Friend and humble Servant.

PHILADELPHIA Feby. 13, 1805.

DANIEL COXE,

DEAR SIR;

I received your obliging favor of the 7th of November last. I observe you had not received my letters of the 8th and 14th of November, answers to which I impatiently wait. The latter was sent under the care of Mr. Warren, in which I suggested a doubt which was excited in my Mind by some of our female friends, whether my dear Granddaughter might not experience some Mortifications in this Country from the remembrance still retained of her Father's conduct. I however left it to her own choice whether to come or not: her being here in the bosom of her Mother's family would certainly be a very desirable thing to us: but as I would wish of all things to promote her Ease and happiness, I should be grieved if any unpleasant Circumstance should induce her when she did come, to repent it. I observe you suggest a considerable unwillingness in her to be separated from her little brother William. As to his coming here, it would certainly be an unadvised and imprudent Step; his life would be made uncomfortable even among the boys he must associate with at School;—it must not be thought of;—England is the country he must look to for advancement in the World. I do not wonder at Sophia's solicitude about him; it is a proof of the goodness of her heart. Poor dear creature! I wish I could determine with certainty what would most conduce to her happiness: that surely should be my Choice; as it is, she must

choose for herself; if she should make up her mind to remain in England, do let me know what it will be necessary for me to do in her behalf. I shall cheerfully contribute to her support and comfort as far as will be consistent with my ability and the duty I owe to my other Children. My Income will be necessarily much diminished, when I resign my Office, which will probably take place very soon, as I am growing feeble and unable to bear the fatigue of long Journeys.

You will doubtless confer with the dear Girl on this subject, the result of which I should wish to hear as soon as possible.

I am, Dear Sir, with great Esteem

Your obliged humble servant.

PHILADELPHIA April 11, 1805.

DANIEL COXE,

DEAR SIR:

I am favored with your obliging Letter of the 2nd of January. last. I observe my dear Granddaughter Sophia is for various good reasons averse to coming to America: happy as I should be to have her with me, I cannot but approve her determination to remain in England. I wish it was in my power to make her life comfortable in whatever part of the World she should choose for her residence. The Residue of the property my dear daughter left in my hands consists of 48 shares of our 8 per cent Stock of the value of one hundred dollars each Share. I find however I remitted in advance to her more than I received of the interest of this Stock, so as to leave yet a small balance due to me. I however inclose you a Bill of Exchange for £100 Sterling which is to be considered not as on account of my daughter's property, but as a present to Sophia, which she will please to accept for her own Use, it may enable her to indulge her generosity to her brother William.

As I am becoming feeble from my advanced age, and as Mr. Burd is one of my daughter's Executors, I think it would be proper for me to transfer the above mentioned Stock to him in trust for the purposes of her Will.

He will be very careful to remit the produce to you as soon as he receives it. I shall by this Opportunity answer my dear Granddaughter's affectionate Letter.

I am Dear Sir

Your obedient and obliged humble Servant.

PHILADELPHIA April 11, 1805.

MY DEAR SOPHIA.

Your very affectionate Letter of the 25th of December came safely to hand. I am not the least surprized at the repugnance you seem to feel at the leaving your brothers, and what may be almost called your native Country in order to embark for America. Your ties there are strong, this would be a new Country to you, and for which you have little reason to entertain any affection, independent of that which is confined to the individuals of your and your dear departed Mother's natural friends and family:—they would all be extremely rejoiced to have you in their bosoms, but by no means at the risk of your happiness or comfort. Your Sentiments regarding the attachment to your brothers do you honor, and I cannot but applaud the determination you make of remaining with them—this indeed is not a Country for them and I strongly suspect not even for you, even for a Visit. I find I remitted to your Mother, at a time when I thought she would stand in need of supplies more than arose from the Interest of her property, so that nothing can be remitted to you now on that account, but lest you should be straitened for money, I now send to Mr. Coxe, a Bill of Exchange for £100 Sterling, to be considered solely as a present to you.

Your dear Mother's property in my hands consists of 8 per cent Stock in the funds of the United States, which I mean to transfer to Mr. Burd, one of her Executors, for the use of those she intended it for by her Will.

He will accordingly remit the produce from it as it comes to his hands. What I can spare I shall occasionally send you myself, under the care of your good friend, Mr. Coxe.

Believe me, my dear Child, Your ever affectionate

Grandfather.

PHILADELPHIA April 30 1805

DANIEL COXE Esq

DEAR SIR;

I take this opportunity of sending you the second of the sett of Bill Exchange for £100 Sterling, which I mean as a present to my dear Granddaughter Sophia Arnold. I inclosed you the first of the sett in a Letter I wrote you on the 11th of this month, which I hope you will have received before this arrives.

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Since my last I have received your & Miss Arnold's esteemed favours, yours without date, hers of the 29th of January. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude for the Interest you take in her Affairs and for the communications you make of your Sentiments on her Subject. I shall endeavour to avail myself of every thing you recommend.

I am, &c.

PHILA. April 15, 1806

TO EDWARD ARNOLD, ESQ., CALCUTTA.

DEAR EDWARD,

The Bearer hereof is Mr. George Emlen, a young Gentleman of good Character and respectable family who goes to Calcutta on mercantile business. As it may possibly be of some use to him to be known to some Gentleman of that country, I beg leave to introduce him to your acquaintance, more especially as he has a prospect on his return to America of forming a nearer connection with my family.

I lately received a handsome letter from your amiable Sister, who is in good health, and situated in London to her Satisfaction. She always expresses herself with much affection and gratitude to her absent Brothers. I understand your brother George is arrived in India with good prospects. Give my love to him, and believe me to be

Your affectionate Grandfather.

(To be continued.)